(c) The State Government has released the amount of Rs. 195.66 crore and the nine DCCBs have kept them as deposits in Andhra Pradesh State Cooperative Bank Ltd. as Statutory Liquidity Ratio.

Scheme for repertory theatre group

*549. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme for supporting the repertory theatre groups in the country;

(b) if so, the number of repertory theatre groups are supported under this scheme;

(c) whether it is a fact that a few leading theatre groups have not been receiving grant for the last two years; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKASONI): (a) Ministry of Tourism* Culture, Department of Culture is supporting repertory theatre groups under the Schemes of (i) Financial Assistance to Professional Groups and Individuals for Specified Performing Art Projects; and (ii) Building Grant to Cultural Organizations.

(b) A total of 239 repertory theatre groups were supported under these schemes in the year 2005-06.

(c) and (d) All theatre groups selected for receiving grants are being given financial assistance regularly and there has been no change in this position in the two years.

Shortfall in collection of education cess

*550. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the revenue receipts from the two per cent education cess in the first eight months of current fiscal at Rs. 2,400 crore have been only a third of the budgeted yearly estimates of Rs. 6,975 crore;

(b) whether Government are of the view that such drastic shortfall will have a negative impact on successful conduct of elementary and other education programmes like 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan';

(c) if so, the details of any action contemplated to redress the shortfall of money; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) In the current fiscal, eight months have not yet been completed. However, during the last fiscal, so far as indirect taxes are concerned, Rs. 2600.30 crore have been collected in the first eight months against the Budget Estimates (BE) of Rs. 3572 crore which is 72.8% of the B.E. (of indirect taxes), much higher than the pro-rata target. Insofar as direct taxes are concerned, the information is not yet available for the last fiscal 2005-06. However, in the fiscal 2004-05, the education cess collected in respect of direct taxes was Rs. 1804.51 crore (where as Rs. 2514.22 crore was collected in respect of indirect taxes in 2004-05).

(b) to (d) No, Sir. Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (PSK) has been shown as a separate line item in the Budget of 2006-07. Budget 2005-06 assumes Rs. 6,975 crore estimated receipts through "education cess". The allocation made in BE 2005-06 for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-day-Meal Scheme (MDM) was Rs. 11,145.26 crore which was enhanced to Rs. 11,156.01 crore in the revised estimates of the fiscal 2005-06. The above allocations are irrespective of the fact whether revenue budgeted through education cess is actually realized or not.

In the current year 2006-07 also, an amount of Rs. 8,746 crore has been assumed as receipts through education cess, out of which Rs. 5831 crore has been allocated to SSA and Rs. 2915 crore to MDM. As against this, the budget provision for these two flagship programmes, namely, SSA and MDM, is Rs. 16,348 crore, which is about twice the receipts that are being estimated to be received through "education cess" during the year. It may be noted that the outlay for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-Day Meal Scheme has been considerably enhanced in the year 2006-07 as compared to the Budgetary allocations provided for these programmes during 2005-06.